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Assessment of the awareness, perception, attitudes, and preparedness of health-care professionals potentially exposed to COVID-19 in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract: Background Since COVID-19 surfaced in December 2019, health-care organizations across the globe have struggled to maintain the safety and well-being of health-care professionals (HCPs). Purpose This study investigates the HCPs' general understanding of the health risks of COVID-19 and to what extent they are equipped with the knowledge to protect themselves and others against this contagion. Methods This cross-sectional study used a web-based structured questionnaire posted on the UAE government electronic survey portal. A collection of 941 HCPs from diverse general and specialty hospitals in the UAE responded to an electronic participation invite. Results Our analysis showed that the majority of HCPs (97.6%) had updated information about COVID-19 modes of transmission, risks of contamination, high-risk groups, and the potential consequences of testing positive. Furthermore, the results of the chi-squared testing revealed that the HCPs' confidence and vigilance of the COVID-19 threats were significantly increased ($p < 0.01$) by being experienced, having had infection control training, or/and having undergone COVID-19 education. Conclusion We conclude that HCPs have an evidence-based understanding of the ways their own health is at risk while they are performing their duties in hospital setups. Further, the study found that HCPs who undergo special infection control training and who are kept posted on the official updates on COVID-19 are more likely to remain vigilant at all times to minimize the risks to themselves and their patients. Although the generalizability of the study findings should be considered with caution, the results could be generalizable to health-care professionals who received similar COVID-19 related training in the UAE or other regional countries.